

Application No. 10/646,137  
Docket No. 0220-009

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Amended) A support device comprising:  
a belt portion having a first end and a second end;  
a locking member for attaching the first end and the second end to form a loop; ~~and~~  
a ring member for integrating the belt portion with a safety strap; and  
at least one connection member for mating with a corresponding connection member of the safety strap, wherein the loop is adapted to extend ~~extends~~ around an elevated portion of a pole, the belt portion is adapted to secure ~~secures~~ the safety strap to the pole, and the safety strap is adapted to attach ~~attaches~~ to a body belt of a technician.
2. (Amended) The support device of claim 1, wherein the ring member ~~is structured and arranged to encircle~~ encircles the belt portion and the safety strap.
3. (Amended) The support device of claim 2, wherein the ring member ~~is structured and arranged to maintain~~ maintains contact between an outer surface of the belt portion and an inner surface of the safety strap.

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4. (Amended) The support device of claim 2, wherein the ring member ~~is structured and arranged to slide~~ slides along the belt portion and the safety strap.
5. (Original) The support device of claim 2, wherein the ring member comprises one or more of: metal, polypropylene, reinforced fabric, leather, polyester, plastic, and rubber.
6. (Canceled)
7. (Amended) The support device of claim 1 6, wherein the at least one connection member comprises one of: a snap, a hook, a loop, a clamp, a ring, and a patch.
8. (Amended) The support device of claim 1, wherein the technician is secured to the pole by the safety strap and at least one gaff having a blade portion extending into the pole, wherein at least one of said ring member and said connection member prevents ~~and the support device apparatus is structured and arranged to keep~~ the technician from descending from the elevated portion of the pole ~~in the event that~~ if the blade portion of said gaff dislodges from the pole.
9. (Amended) The support device of claim 2, wherein contact between the safety strap and the pole is maintained by the belt portion ~~in the event that~~ if the blade portion dislodges from the pole.

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10. (Amended) The support device of claim 1, further comprising an adjustment portion for adjusting a size of the loop.
11. (Original) The support device of claim 4, wherein the adjustment portion is integral with the belt portion.
12. (Original) The support device of claim 1, wherein the belt portion comprises at least one of nylon webbing, polypropylene webbing, reinforced fabric, leather, polyester, plastic, rubber, and metal.
13. (Original) The support device of claim 1, wherein the belt portion comprises a chain.
14. (Original) The support device of claim 1, wherein the locking member comprises at least one of a buckle assembly and a latching hook assembly.

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15. (Amended) A ~~support~~ method for securing a technician to a pole comprising:  
attaching a body belt of said technician to a safety strap; and support device so as to  
~~secure a~~  
securing said safety strap to a pole via a support device, the safety strap being attached to  
~~a body belt of a technician and wherein~~ the support device ~~including~~ includes: a belt portion  
having a first end and a second end; a locking member for attaching the first end and the second  
end; ~~and a ring member for integrating the belt portion and the safety strap; and at least one~~  
connection member for mating with a corresponding connection member of the safety strap.
16. (Original) The support method of claim 15, wherein attaching the support device  
comprises:  
guiding the belt portion of the support device around the pole;  
positioning the ring member;  
attaching the first end of the belt portion to the second end of the belt portion; and  
adjusting the belt portion to tighten the support device.
17. (Original) The support method of claim 15, wherein:  
the belt portion and the safety strap are integrated by at least one connection member; and  
attaching the support device comprises disconnecting the at least one connection  
member.

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18. (Original) The support method of claim 15, further comprising ascending the pole.

19. (Original) The support method of claim 15, wherein securing the safety strap comprises:

releasing a first end of the safety strap from the body belt;  
wrapping the safety strap around the pole; and  
reattaching the first end of the safety strap to the body belt.

20. (Amended) A support assembly comprising:

a safety strap for securing a technician to a pole, the safety strap ~~being structured and arranged to extend~~ extending around an elevated portion of a pole and attaching ~~attach~~ to a body belt of a technician;

a support device for securing the safety strap to the pole and for preventing the technician from descending from the elevated portion of the pole ~~in the event that the~~ if a blade portion of a gaff attached to the technician dislodges from the pole; and

a ring member for integrating the safety strap and support device wherein said safety strap includes a connection member for mating with a corresponding connection member of the support device.